FORWARD & Left Caucus Newsletter – Abortion rights campaign & Morgentaler Defence campaign Journals -- PARTS 4 & 5

1974

No.1-1 Free Dr. Morgentaler – Women's rights martyr
No.1-2 BC women call mock parliament
No.2-1 Women's rights resolution challenges Ont. & BC rallies
No.2-3 NDP Women's Assembly
No.2-3 Morgentaler faces court
No.2-4 Daycare threatened by Gov't proposed cutback
No.3-1 Morgentaler confronts Supreme Court showdown
Reform Alliance continues campaign; protests grow for daycare
(W15a) Gay human rights are not protected

1975

No.4-1a Morgentaler & the abortion repeal struggle
No.4-1b Page 2: Photo Dr. Morgentaler -- Women's Movement Default
No.5 Action not jingles in Intl'l Women's Year (wait for Trudeau)
No.5 (NDP magazine) Priority issue (Dr. Morgentaler case)
No.6 The challenge for women (International Women's Year)
(NDP column) Funds for NDP women
No.7 May 10 – for national women's rights action
Fired racing steward fights gov't anti-gay discrimination
No.7-1a From matriarchy to the patriarch (Book by Evelyn Reed, SWP-US)
No.7-1b p2- Review by Ellie Kirzner' ; Photos Reed and Frederick Engels
No 8-1a Amnesty for Morgentaler
No.8-1b How Morgentaler was imprisoned (Tolentino interview)
No.8-1c (continuation) "...(GM) editorials and cartoons..."
May 1- protest grows as militant IWY action
BC women score IWY
No.9-1a End the vendetta now – Morgentaler Amnesty!
No.9-1b Outrage at Morgentaler jailing quickens movement for repeal
No.9-2a Where we're at in IWY (Union women meet after May 10 march)
No.9-2b p2- Photo Toronto May 10 March for women's rights
No. 10 Lang's admission demands amnesty for Morgentaler
No. 11 Cross Country with the NDP: Program on abortion
Women unionists launch new movement for rights
No. 11 Pro-repeal forces gaining momentum (abortion legislation)
No. 12 Morgentaler must be freed
Rosemary Brown speech on feminism and socialism

Unionized women's conference

Vol.2 No.1(13) Photo: Speaker for amnesty for Morgentaler
Vol.2 *(Review) Women at Work (1850-1930)*

1976

Vol.2 (14) Morgentaler still in jail, gov't steps up abuse
Vol.2 (14) *Where are women at now? (IWY balance sheet)*
Vol.2 (15) Drop the charges, Free Morgentaler
Vol.2 (16) *Women unionists plan action conferences*
*Vol.*2 (16) Morgentaler actions set stage for repeal
Vol.2 (17) *Labor women meet (CLC recognizes need)*
Vol.2 (17) *Anti sexual policies shake RC grip*
Vol.2 (18) Unions support abortion repeal
Vol.2 (18) *What perspectives for working women?*
Vol.2 (19) *CLC rally acclaims struggle of women*
Vol.2 (21) *Uncovering Cdn feminism's past (Book review)*
Vol.2 (21) *Damien court fight key civil rights (gay) issue*
Vol.2 (21) *Labour Council, NDP support gay rights*
Vol.2-22-1a Abortion 'private decision,' doctor's new book tells women
Vol.2-22-1b Page 2 "...(burden of) inevitable pregnancy..."
Vol.2-22-1c Gov't defies juries in Morgentaler case
Vol.2-22-2 *Ont. NDP women meet to discuss party platform*
Vol.2-22-3 *What course for (NDP) women's caucus?*
Vol.2-22-4 Will Que. Gov't grant freedom to Morgentaler?

1977

No.24 Morgentaler freed: Law repeal next?
No.25 *Report accidentally affirms inequality on abortion right*
No.26 Freedom of choice forces to take more militant stance
Toronto Women's conference debates equal pay for women
No.27 *ONDP women project party as force in women's movement*
No.28-1 Union women plan activities (Lois Bedard active in OWW)

1978

No.31-1 Discrimination hits women workers
CBC clanger on Nellie McClung (suffragette)
No.33 *The police "doing their job" harassing Fleck's striking women*

1979

No.35 *The Year of the Child*
#36-1 NDP rounds out platform on women, by Alice Klein

1980

No.40 *Campaign for equal wages for women (CLC)*
No.41 *Women's conference highlights Day Care*
No.42-1 Problem of unionizing women (in labor movement, by Wayne Roberts
No.43 *Daycare cutback -- unions join struggle*

1981

No.44 *Women's rally for a constituent assembly*

1983

No.49 Freestanding (abortion) clinic open

1984

No.50 *Women leading fight over plant closure*

No.51-p7 ONDP supports Morgentaler

No.51-p8 (Victory in) Morgentaler case (Angie Codina)

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

forward

Vol. 1, No. 1. July 1974 Toronto 20 cents

Free Dr Morgentaler Women's rights martyr

by Ellie Kirzner

"Our fight is a fight for human rights, for freedom to choose, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion. Our fight is for decency and humanity and the most fundamental of freedoms, the right to decent medical care when needed by women who have decided they need an abortion."

This is part of a bold statement issued by Dr. Henry Morgentaler on May 4, nine days after the Quebec Court of Appeal, in scandalous fashion, overturned the earlier decision of the twelve person jury which acquitted him of the first of thirteen charges against him for performing "illegal" abortions. Dr. Morgentaler has for several years been providing safe abortions in his Montreal clinic for women in a province where the overwhelming majority of hospitals have refused to establish abortion committees.

The overturning of the jury decision which had cleared him of the charge renders Morgentaler "guilty" before the courts and makes him liable to life imprisonment. This act of the Quebec Court arrogantly tramples not only on the rights of one man, not only on the rights of women in this country to safe legal abortions, but also on the rights of every citizen to fair legal proceedings. As an angry editorial in the Toronto Globe and Mail phrased it, the court "has declared, in effect, that justice is something too rarified to reside in the hands of the people. In doing this, the court has affronted justice — seriously affronted one of the most valuable components of our juridicial system."

The Liberals and Conservatives who are clearly responsible for the restrictive abortion laws in the first place have repeatedly blocked the persistent efforts of Grace MacInnis, NDP MP, to raise the repeal issue in the House. As well, the insulting speech made by Justice Minister Otto Lang in late March calling on the provinces to clamp down on hospital abortions makes it patently obvious that the repeal of the present laws is the farthest thing from the Liberal government's mind.

The position of the New Democratic Party is quite different; it has been on record for some time declaring unequivocally for repeal and that "doctors should no longer face criminal charges for carrying out abortions." Women activists within the Party are organizing to make sure that the case of Dr. Morgentaler and other issues related to women are widely heard.

The fight to repeal oppressive abortion laws is in this decade the opening shot in the battle for the liberation of women. That opponents of women's rights understand the importance of this juncture is evidenced in the full page ad in the Toronto Star this month, sponsored by the "Right to Life" and paid for by the Knights of Columbus. Featuring a picture of a baby the ad urges its readers to "Fight Abortion". Dripping with a humanism which is false and hypocritical to the core the ad states that the baby is "Never to Smile, Never to Taste the Summer". Ignoring the established fact of the mutilation of women by botched illegal abortions, the ad reveals its patently anti-human thrust. Surely the joy of new life can only be a reality when every mother is a willing mother and every child a wanted child.

The choice to terminate a pregnancy must be in the hands of every woman — not just of those who can afford to trip to New York, or those who have the stamina and connections to make their way through the hospital board procedure — but all women, primarily working women and those in rural areas who suffer most from the unjust law.

DR. HENRY MORGENTALER

What we witness at this point in the Morgentaler case is what he himself termed a "spirit of vengeance against women" — an aggressive offensive by the right, reflected on the judicial level, and in the letter writing campaigns and other efforts of the Right to Life. Only a forthright response from womens liberation activitists, the trade union movement, the NDP, and all those who are concerned with democratic rights can turn the tide in Morgentaler's case before he reaches the Supreme Court sometime next fall. The silence must be broken!

In this issue read —

Rank & file revolt at CLC

Portugal faces the future

Behind Que language disp

forward #2 (1974)

MORGENTALER FACES COURT

by Ellie Kirzner

While Dr. Henry Morgentaler prepares to meet the Supreme Court of Canada on October 3rd, a massive telegram campaign has been launched by Pierre Berton and June Callwood calling for repeal of the oppressive laws under which he faces imprisonment. The Supreme Court hearings will follow in the wake of a set of complicated proceedings by which Dr. Morgentaler has seen himself declared innocent of performing an illegal abortion by a jury, only to have this decision overturned by the Quebec Court of Appeals. On July 25th, he was sentenced to 18 months in jail.

The dramatic telegram campaign sponsored by the widely-based Freedom of Choice, is being built in the midst of continued excitement and controversy which surrounds the issue. A pre-election rally initiated by the Toronto Morgentaler Defense Committee, chaired by June Callwood and featuring Dr. Morgentaler, was addressed by Ionna Samis representing the Ontario Federation of Labour, a number of NDP candidates, a Waffle spokesperson, and representatives from the League for Socialist Action, the Revolutionary Marxist Group and the Socialist League.

As well, in late June, the general council of the Canadian Medical Association was able to withstand the organized efforts of anti-abortion doctors who were attempting to impose more stringent guidelines on the granting of abortions.

More recently, it has generated a full page article on the abortion issue in the Toronto Star when Justice Minister Otto Lang shared a page with June Callwood. Countering Lang's bleatings that abortion is murder, Callwood scored the government's hypocrisy by charging that " . . the real killers of babies are not doctors like Dr. Morgentaler or people who sign the telegram to change abortion laws. The biggest baby killers sit in the House of Commons, in all the provincial parliaments and in municipal offices, where budgets are drafted and priorities are established that essentially discard children. When reverence for life stops at the moment that the umbilical cord is cut, it cannot be taken seriously."

The recent headlined expose of fly-by-night abortion referral agents has revealed the way in which repressive abortion laws generate even wider realms of exploitation for women. Often charging up to $150 for the referral alone, these centres exemplify the de-humanizing effects of not making abortion a safe, legal, and socially legitimated alternative for women.

At exactly the same time that Dr. Morgentaler was before the courts fighting for women's right to safe and self-respecting abortions, the Toronto press was sensationalizing the details of one referral agency which was sending women to the filthy office of a Buffalo doctor convicted of criminally negligent homocide in the death of a patient. A cruel irony exists in the fact that while shady profiteers are free to feed off the miseries of Canadian women, Dr. Morgentaler gets an 18 month sentence.

Girding themselves for the October 3rd Supreme Court confrontation, abortion repeal groups have made plans on a number of levels. The Freedom of Choice, besides the continuation of the telegram campaign, has retained well-known civil rights lawyer Clayton Ruby to prepare and present a brief to the Supreme Court as an intervenor in the Morgentaler hearings. The Canadian Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (CARAL) has established an office and employed an organizer to coordinate national efforts, and the Morgentaler Defense Committees across the country are planning rallies and demonstrations for the end of September.

forward #3 (Oct. 1974)
Editor: Wayne Roberts

Morgentaler confronts Supreme Court showdown

by the Editors

On October 2nd, Henry Morgentaler will appear before the highest judicial body in Canada to hear his fate.

Dr. Morgentaler's case has a long history. Though acquitted by a jury of his peers after being charged under Canada's anti-abortion laws, the decision was reversed by the Quebec Court of Appeal in a move which appeared to many to be an affront to the jury system. "This law does not require respect, it demands obedience," the trial judge stated angrily before sentencing Morgentaler to one and a half years in jail.

The appeal from this decision, to be heard by the Supreme Court of Canada, takes place at a time when Otto Lang, Canada's "Justice" Minister, has called for a law to make hospitals liable for "failure to exercise responsibility" in approving abortion actions too freely.

Lang's sabre-rattling has already given the green light to the arbitrary dictates of individual hospital doctors or boards. The Women's College Hospital family planning clinic in downtown Toronto has performed only two abortions since July 1st. Even the number of abortions for patients admitted on a private doctor-patient basis has declined by 33 percent. In Niagara Falls, the Niagara General Hospital's board of governors has cracked down on its therapeutic abortion committee and imposed restrictions on gynecologist Ken Walker, a local doctor who upholds the right of

continued on page 2

Supreme Court Showdown

continued from page 1

women to choose. The number of abortions that the hospital performed through mid-1974 was down from the previous year by seventy-five.

Phyllis Curry, the public health nurse who is in charge of the Central Abortion Referral and Education Service in Toronto, has said that the crackdown at Toronto's Women's College Hospital "just highlights what is happening." The Toronto **Globe and Mail** on September 25th listed a number of hospitals, VD and birth control centres, and family planning clinics who have cut back their services out of fear or as a result of government cutbacks in financing. With only 260 out of 1,300 hospitals providing abortion service in Canada, the crackdown Lang is encouraging can deprive thousands of women of the right to choose.

Lang's outspoken statements on abortion have a long history. As the darling of the 'right-to-lifers', he emerged during the federal election as the chief partisan of anti-abortion sentiment in the government. The crackdown which he has initiated on hospitals performing abortions would be given decisive impetus if the Supreme Court upholds Morgentaler's conviction.

Dr. Morgentaler, throughout the lengthy court procedures, has continued to argue that women should be permitted to choose whether they wished to terminate a pregnancy or continue with it. He has posed his case in the most political light.

The decision of the Supreme Court, which may be unavailable for some time after the hearing itself, will be made under intense political pressures, both from the Justice Minister and from those who have rallied to Morgentaler's defence.

At least six different groups, including Alliance for Life and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, have been granted status to present arguments before the Supreme Court of Canada. There are only a few rare precedents in Canada's entire history for permitting such "interventions" in a criminal matter. It is obvious the Supreme Court is preparing to make a decision which may affect the lives of thousands of women.

The politically sensitive Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Bora Laskin, will have to choose between forcing thousands of women to backstreet butchers or making abortion available to all.

If justice is to be done, Morgentaler must be found innocent.

forward #4 (1975)
Editor: Wayne Roberts

Balance sheet on the repeal movement

Morgentaler & the Abortion

By Alice Klein

As Morgentaler's Supreme Court hearing draws to a close, Justice Minister Otto Lang's crusade to deny women legal abortion is intensifying almost beyond belief.

Lang's direct orders restricting abortion in the North West Territories to virtually nil and cautioning liberal hospital committees to prevent what he sneeringly terms their 'abortion on demand' policies are now crowned by his latest move to block government funds to any agency which provides abortion counselling or referral in the course of its services. He has gone so far as to suggest that abortion referral services may be illegal.

The viciousness of this new attack, coming as it does in the midst of the final round of Morgentaler's lengthy court battle, is cruel testimony to the resolve of the federal government to prevent a repeal victory.

At the same time, Lang's ability to proceed with this offensive is evidence of the relative weakness of the repeal movement.

Repeal activists can only be puzzled by the striking dissimilarity of Canadian events with those in the US which culminated in the Supreme Court victory, overturning US abortion restrictions.

The American repeal movement emerged at the height of the powerful radicalization spurred by the anti-Vietnam war movement which had shaken the American ruling class to its very roots. The fact that the burgeoning women's liberation movement was showing all the vital signs of continuing in the same tradition was a distinct advantage.

Moreover, mixed motives influenced the granting of repeal. To the racists who rule the US, the rapidly growing third world population in the US was alarming. This made a measure which they saw as contributing to minority population control, seem less offensive.

As well, two aspects of the specifically American revolutionary tradition hastened the victory of repeal in the US. Embedded in the Constitution is the Bill of Rights, which was the basis for the legal challenge to the laws. When Morgentaler's defense referred to the contravention of the Canadian Bill of Rights, inherent in our abortion laws, the Supreme Court judge ruled this line of defense irrelevant.

Equally important, the legacy of the American revolution has served to undermine the political power and influence of the Catholic church. The same cannot be said of Canada.

We have been aware from the beginning that in seeking to overturn the abortion laws, we were confronting head-on the Catholic Church male hierarchy. We recognize that the organizational strength of the 'fetus fetishists' has rested on the ability of the Catholic Church, given its wealth and resources, to influence its followers. It is now clear, however, that the real effectiveness of their campaign has not been to swing public opinion against abortion. On the contrary, polls continue to record majority opinion favouring repeal. Rather, we are seeing the capacity of the Catholic Church, through common interest and well-established channels, to influence this country's rulers. Morgentaler's case dramatizes this. While a Quebecois and presumably Catholic jury refused to convict him, the Quebec Government hastened to overturn their verdict.

Results of a gallup poll published October 26, 1974 show 62 percent of Canadians believe abortion should be a decision between a woman and her doctor. Seven percent were undecided.

This obstacle does not relieve us from reviewing the subjective problems which surround the campaign. After all, the Canadian movement has had the advantage of the NDP's and trade union movement's endorsation of repeal, and above all the compelling example of Henry Morgentaler whose heroic actions have served to provide a focal point of the struggle. Yet the challenge to speak out, to unite behind the movement implicit in Morgentaler's acts, remains to an appalling degree, unfulfilled. Lang's ability to launch an offensive at this point is confirmation of this sad fact.

In part, the weakness of the repeal movement can be accounted for by the impact of Trudeau's liberalization of the law in 1969. Those most likely to be mobilized into the repeal movement, women in urban centers with knowledge of the laws and access to sympathetic doctors and hospital boards, were those to whom legal abortion was most readily available. This created the illusion that abortion was not a major problem for the majority of women. This shortsightedness, now shattered by the anti-repeal offensive, was a block to the development of the campaign.

NDP Failure

In addition, while the NDP and the trade union movement have supported repeal, they have, for the most part, done so on paper only.

→ p. 2

Repeal Struggle #4-p.2

p.2

Symbolic of this was the manner in which the NDP carried themselves in the last election. The NDP's central campaign office went so far as to caution their candidates not to raise the abortion issue — fearing controversy that might harm their election effort. The outcome of the election indicates that this approach in no way served their ends. Rather, in spite of the fact that they evaded the issue, 'Right to Life' forces have claimed gloatingly a hand in Lewis' defeat.

It appears that Lewis was not the only prominent individual with a reputation as a champion of civil liberties and human rights to be intimidated by the anti-abortion forces. Only lately have a number of prominent humanitarians overcome their blushing hesitancy to identify themselves with an issue so intimately related to the right of women to control their own reproductive organs.

Women's Movement Default

Ultimately, however, the weakness of the repeal movement can only be accounted for by the weaknesses within the women's movement itself. Because its response to this challenge was such a fractured one, it was unable to lead the recalcitrant humanitarians, the NDP and the trade union movement into the heat of battle. One wing of the movement, convinced that men, not big business were the prime enemy, considered the question of abortion secondary to the task of creating a sub-culture of services and consciousness-raising activities aiming to lessen the weight of male domination through sisterhood and solidarity. While their undertakings have a legitimate place in the women's movement, the failure of this layer of feminists to mobilize themselves at crucial moments in the struggle and their evident hostility towards the abortion campaign were serious impediments to the struggle. One Toronto group even took the absurd position of rationalizing their lack of participation in this struggle by explaining that since Morgentaler was male, he represented the enemy and therefore deserved no support from the women's movement.

Others on the left, blinded by their revolutionary rhetoric, scorned the idea of involving themselves in struggle for a mere reform — a struggle which they felt failed to draw real class lines between bourgoise and working class women. They overlooked the fact that it is only poor and working class women to whom the present abortion laws present any real hardship.

To the extent that these forces have taken notice of the existing struggle for abortion law repeal, they have tended to counterpose the demand for 'free abortion on demand' as if in Canada, where there is no province which doesn't have some form of socialized medicine, the main obstacle to women seeking legal abortion is a question of cost. On the contrary, it is the laws, not insurance-paid hospital bills, which force most women to seek illegal or out of country abortions, playing financial and emotional havoc with their lives. To direct the force of the movement elsewhere or blunt its thrust with vague formulations constitutes an evasion of the problem or worse — a sectarian reluctance to participate in the real struggle.

Finally some self criticism is in order for those of us who have attempted to build the abortion movement. Frequently, the campaign has been conceived of too narrowly. The 1972 convention of the Canadian Women's Coalition For Abortion Law Repeal, for instance, abandoned its earlier slogan, "every mother a willing mother; every child a wanted child"; a slogan which enabled the movement to reply to the false humanism of 'Right To Lifers'. It also rejected the petition drive which at the time was the most visible way of manifesting opposition to the government. Instead, it seemed to project naive visions of progressively bigger demonstrations and seriously overestimated the breadth of militant feminist sentiment. The result was a campaign which often substituted dedication of its small numbers for a relationship with broader forces receptive to the compelling nature of the issue.

New Possibilities

While we must understand our errors to illuminate the path to victory, we must also take note of our success. In the last period, the abortion campaign, under the pressure of events, has broadened as never before. Women in the NDP are propelling the issue forward. The Waffle has endorsed the campaign. Prominent individuals have taken important initiatives, particularly with the telegram and media

drives to build the movement. Doctors have formed an organization to win repeal. The gay movement has for the first time expressed its solidarity with this issue. New forces in many other areas, are beginning to organize. The repeal movement is growing more numerous and more determined. If the lesson of the past has been that our disunity has opened the door to government attack, these developments are evidence of a renewed impetus on the path towards victory.

forward #5 (1975)

Priority issue

A ten-page supplement on Dr. Morgentaler and the abortion question is part of the October issue of **Priorities**. **Priorities** is the monthly publication of the Standing Committee on Women's Rights of the B.C. NDP. The series of articles contained in the supplement marks a significant step forward from the traditional lipservice which the NDP has given in the past to both the abortion issue and the Morgentaler case.

The cover of the issue shows Dr. Morgentaler and his statement: "I am more firmly convinced than ever that the law under which I am now being tried is unjust, cruel and dangerous to women."

The editorial is also dedicated to the abortion issue and to Dr. Morgentaler. It acknowledges that in the early days of the women's movement, "we were hesitant to take up, let alone concentrate on this issue." But it goes on to recognize that "whether we like it or not, our movement is inextricably tied up with the abortion issue . . . It is not only Dr. Morgentaler on trial; it is the women's movement on trial with him . . . As long as we, as individual women, do not have the right to determine if and when and whether we will become parents, we will never have the right to determine our independence in any other sphere."

The supplement gives substantial and important factual background on the whole issue. Sections 251 and 252 of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion are quoted. An extensive assessment is given of the implications of the Criminal Code regarding the Therapeutic Abortion Committees and Dr. Morgentaler's own struggle to overcome the injustice of these legal restrictions imposed on women seeking abortions. It calls on all women to renew their involvement in Dr. Morgentaler's case — on their own behalf.

A brief history describes Dr. Morgentaler's long background in the struggle for justice and humanism. A further article describes the forces opposed to the removal of abortion from the Criminal Code, such as the organized religions, and state with its courts, laws and institutions, and the most common arguments raised by them. Three moving letters to Dr. Morgentaler, each one a personal testimony to his case, conclude the supplement.

This open and educational approach by **Priorities** can lead towards the better understanding and active involvement by many New Democrats in the abortion struggle and in defence of Dr. Morgentaler, himself a New Democrat. This approach is also the only way to cut across the witchhunting which took advantage of an uninformed public and helped cost David Lewis and many other New Democrats their seats in Parliament in the last federal elections.

From matriarchy to the patriarchy

forward
#7 Mar 1975

Evelyn Reed, Women's Evolution, Pathfinder Press, $4.95.

By Ellie Kirzner

In a candid moment, Bronislaw Malinowski, the esteemed father of modern social anthropology, declared that if the matriarchy was proven to have existed, its repercussions would be more catastrophic than the Bolshevik revolution. It's little wonder then that anthropologists sought comfort in an easy arrogance that totally excluded the possibility of an ancient matriarchy. As the famous American anthropologist, Robert Lowie noted: "... there is not a single theoretical problem on which modern anthropologists are so thoroughly in accord as with respect to the utter worthlessness of that (matriarchal) inference."

Although establishment anthropologists revel in a self-assurance reminiscent of medieval scientists' confidence in the flatness of the earth, the matriarchy question has continued to haunt them. Even in 1927 when Malinowski reigned over the discipline, and could airily dismiss Briffault's study, **The Mothers**, as "resplendent in its mythological glamour", many reviewers of this defense of the primitive matriarchy, saw in the book a work of monumental genius. For however self-righteously content mainstream anthropology remained, the discipline was in reality torn between conflicting traditions and aspirations.

From the beginning of modern social analysis, the conception of primitive society has been a central point of controversy. Marked by a compulsion to explain the origins of social conventions and institutions, philosophers returned again and again to the riddle of primitive human life. So Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, Spencer, Engels and a host of intellectual giants attempted to elucidate the nature of savage society. What motivated their efforts was clearly a concern for deciphering human nature in the raw, untouched by the restricting structures of social convention. Thus the search for humankind's early social arrangements became the avenue for high-lighting the sociological nature of behavior, oppression and repression.

Precisely because of the implications of this field of investigation to social thought in general, it was extremely important for capitalism to enlist anthropology in the service of reaction. Thus primitive man emerged as a "naked ape" — the prototype of the modern capitalist; as an animal consumed with territorial imperatives — the prototype of the modern imperialist; or alternatively as the prototype of the modern proletariat — the recipient of superior knowledge from flying saucers, (**Chariot of the Gods**) unable to influence the course of history by their own initiatives.

But before anthropology could be perverted to these ends, it had to be stripped of its traditions. The important investigations of Engels and the pioneering work of Morgan were the products of the ruthless search for rationality, unity and pattern in human social activity. Unwilling to crouch before chaos and devoted to the formulation of laws, intellectual thought was absorbed with the problems of the origins of social fact. Thus Darwin sought the origin of species, Engels the origins of the family, private property and the state and Nietsche, the geneology of morals. Rather than accepting social institutions as static categories, thinkers of the last century saw them instead as evolving processes, — as dialectical entities rather than empirical facts. It was precisely this method which led to Engel's revealing of the matriarchy in primitive society.

In modern anthropology, the search for order and social laws has been obscured by the compulsion to collect facts. The celebration of the uniqueness and diversity of human societies has heralded the degeneration of anthropology to the level of American tourism gazing at the exotic behavior of bizarre tribes. Replacing the search for the origins of human social life, is the explanation of **function**; replacing the conception of repression as an axis of social life with a bias towards equilibrium.

If human society was no longer a question of evolution, it was but a narrow step for anthropologists to obliterate the concept of the communal matriarchy. Thus the analysis of the place of women in history was a casualty of the transformation of a discipline; one could say its repudiation became the whipping boy of the new anthropology.

Now in a fascinating and controversial book published for International Women's Day, Evelyn Reed, a long time socialist and feminist enters the fray with a compelling logic in favor of the primitive matriarchy.

Although to summarize is to violate to some extent the power of her argument, the outlines of Reed's analysis proceed as follows: Humankind was conducted from savagery to civilization by the efforts of women. In order to establish cooperative society, humanity had to overcome the oestial legacies of which cannibalism was one of the most important. It was women who initiated totems and taboos, sacrosanct rules to govern human life. Women's nurturing instincts, still intact from her historical proximity to the animal world, led them to establish the first social laws to protect themselves and their offspring from cannibalism. It is here in her discussion of totems and taboos that Reed generates the biggest challenge to mainstream anthropology which prefers to greet them as exotic curiosities rather than as the origins of cooperative existence. For Reed, women's ability to mother was truly the saving grace to humanity.

Rising out of the animal kingdom, humankind had also to overcome the anti-social brutality of male sexuality, a feat accomplished by women's initiation of the rule of exogamy whereby men had to seek mates outside their own kinship clan. These two taboos around food and sex, inspired by women, made social life possible and laid the basis for the matriarchal clan — a form of social organization which, much to the horror of establishment anthropologists, made "fatherhood" a peripheral social role.

The matriarchal structure of the clan also corresponded to the productive lives of women. Rearing their offspring collectively, women developed the first structures of the community, developed language, medicine, science and artisanship while men, like animals, roamed the forests hunting.

Passage from the matriarchal clan to the patriarchal nuclear family is a misty one, Reed admits, full of ambiguities. By the end of it, women had fallen from their position as creators of culture. The patriarchal nuclear family which enslaved woman rose on the basis of new forms of production and

→p.2

ALSO BY EVELYN REED

Abortion & The Catholic Church	35¢
An Answer to "The Naked Ape"	25¢
Is Biology Woman's Destiny?	50¢
Problems of Women's Liberation	1.75

Order from: FORWARD BOOKS
53 Gerrard St. West, Toronto, Ont.
Telephone: 595-1284

Women's Evolution:

Evelyn Reed, Women's Evolution, Pathfinder Press, $4.95.

forward p.2

distribution associated with the development of agriculture, which generated social surpluses, and finally a new social strata made powerful by its accumulation of private property.

With the imposition of property relations on to personal relations, the traditional rituals which graced and eased human relations, were transformed. Gifts became purchases, bride gifts became bride prices, as women and children came to be viewed as objects of ownership. All these socioeconomic revisions profoundly affected the structure and relations of family life, but for none was the transformation so sharp as for woman. With the rise of private property, women ceased to be matriarchs and became for the first time the second sex.

Reed's method is founded on the brilliant reinterpretation of traditional material welded together in a search for laws and patterns of social evolution rather than for idiosyncrasies and oddities. In this sense, the book offers a startling revamping of time-worn assumptions about primitive life spun by anthropologists whose anti-evolutionist biases fed the misinterpretation of their own data.

There are doubtless gaps to be found in this enchanting book which future research will elucidate, for the significance of Reed's book lies not in its faultlessness but in its method. Some of her ideas are even a little painful to swallow like her suggestion that primitive women were underdeveloped relative to men, in their sexual desires — an offering that is a little too close for comfort given modern stereotypes.

Nonetheless, Reed has offered the women's movement an inspiration and perspective unparalleled in modern feminist writings. Clearly stamped on each page is the conception that human beings are the subjects and objects of their own historical development; that unaided by a God or other mystical entities, humans have hauled themselves from animalism through savagery to civilization. Once having conquered cannibalism and bestiality, think how much more easy will be the overcoming of the economic cannibalism of capitalism and the transition to socialism.

Reed reaffirms a core proposition of Marxism — that the degradation of women has its genesis in the system of private property — that the oppression and exploitation of women is sunk into the very structures of class society. Here may be revealed the final irony, for just as women eased the passage to civilization over 99 percent of human history, so too the modern women's movement will without doubt be in the front lines of the creation of the socialist future out of capitalist savagery.

HED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

rward

No. 8 Mid-April 1975 Toronto 20 Cents

Amnesty for Morgentaler

IT'S UP TO YOU, NOW!

by Bill Saunders

The jailing of Doctor Henry Morgentaler for violation of the abortion law and the subsequent refusal of the federal cabinet to grant him amnesty stands as the greatest outrage and hypocrisy possible to conceive in this International Women's Year.

This law, Section 251 of the Criminal Code, forbids an abortion except when, in the opinion of a Therapeutic Abortion Committee of an approved hospital, "continuation of the pregnancy would or would likely to endanger her (the woman's) life or health."

No less than the minister of health and welfare himself, the "Honorable" Marc Lalonde, admitted in the house that less than one third of the hospitals in Canada (all heavily subsidized from the public purse) have neglected or refused to even set up such committees. Thus even abortions that the law deigns to allow are denied hundreds of thousands of women across the

On April 14 a group of prominent individuals who have long been associated with humanitarian causes formed an initiating body for an **Amnesty for Dr. Morgentaler Committee**. This group, chaired by Doctor Gustavo Tolentino, is now seeking sponsors and aid

The committee is setting out to draw together all the mounting public indignation against the jailing of Morgentaler, in order to build a powerful movement that can win his release.

To help this project contact Dr. Tolentino at 99 Avenue Road, Suite 701, Toronto or phone 416-962-3845.

Dr. Morgentaler's imprisonment makes Canada the butt of ridicule and contempt in world public opinion. It has made further mockery of the Bill of Rights and civil liberties and has called forth protests from other countries against this gross miscarriage of justice — this insult to the dignity of woman and to all the people of Canada.

Morgentaler's jailing for one and a half years is the culmination of a vendetta against Dr. Morgentaler himself and a calculated and malicious blow against women's

rights by obscurantist forces across the country entrenched in the church, the legal system and the government.

The hypocrisy of this cabal knows no bounds. They know full well that every year tens of thousands of Canadian women will seek abortions no matter what, rather than bear unwanted children. As a result, the present law makes criminals of these women and causes all women particularly working class women without means or connections to risk death or injury at the hands of incompetent butchers.

The government had hoped that doctors and women would keep their mouths shut and accept this rotten situation. Doctor Morgentaler did not.

He has openly opposed this iniquitous anti-woman law both in word and in deed consistently since 1967. He has thrown his entire career and his very freedom into the struggle for this most basic of women's rights — a woman's right to choose. He has declared that he will continue the struggle jailed or not.

But he must not be allowed to languish there as a persistent and stark warning to other doctors and nurses who true to their knowledge and responsibility might respond to women's needs. The jailing of Doctor Morgentaler makes abortion the central issue, that it truly is, in the actions of this International Women's Year. The struggle against this law is now the struggle to set Morgentaler free.

How Morgentaler was imprisoned

Toronto psychiatrist, Doctor Gustavo Tolentino, steering committee member of Doctors for Repeal of the Abortion Law (DRAL), long time activist for repeal of the abortion law and an active defender of Dr. Henry Morgentaler, discusses with Jane Goldman of **FORWARD** his eyewitness observations of Dr. Morgentaler's giving himself up to the Montreal police on March 27/75, the man, the issue, and the challenge to obtain his pardon or amnesty.

Dr. Gustavo Tolentino

Q. Doctor Tolentino, what was it like in Montreal just prior to and after the Supreme Court brought down its decision to send Dr. Morgentaler to jail,

A. Julie, my wife, and I, had a date to have supper with Doctor Morgentaler while we were holidaying in Montreal, on Wednesday March 26. But he told us that he had decided, at the last moment, to go to Toronto on Wednesday morning to wait the Supreme Court decision with members of the Canadian Association for Repeal of the Abortion Law (CARAL) and DRAL, and hold a press conference there. When he landed in Toronto he was given the shocking news. Meanwhile, in Montreal, we joined his supporters in organizing a welcoming group to meet him at Dorval airport Thursday morning and a demonstration in front of the East-End police station where he would hand himself in.

At Dorval when he appeared, accompanied by his companion Dr. Mireille Lafortune, his brother Mike and his son Abraham, there was an enthusiastic applause and yet the moment was a bitter one for all of us. In a few hours or less he'd be in jail. He drove his car for the last time from the airport to his home. There he picked up some clothes and personal effects. At his lawyer's he had his last formal press conference before heading for the police station.

In front of the police station 70 or so supporters, carrying placards, banners and singing We Shall Overcome, in sub-zero weather, watched as he walked up the steps with his son. He had received some flowers and many tearful embraces when he turned, raised two fingers in a victory signal, and entered the building. Just as we were beginning to look at each and thinking what next must be done, he reappeared. In all the commotion he had either forgotten or wanted to give his dearly loved companion, Dr. Mireille Lafortune, one last hug and kiss. Someone yelled, "Reprieve, Reprieve" and many of us laughed, but only for a short moment.

As we saw him go back in we again faced the stark reality of what had

continued on page 2

Tolentino interviewed on Morgentaler's jailing

continued from page 1

happened. The Supreme Court, with the obvious approval of the Trudeau government, had chosen the day or two before the Easter and Passover weekend to jail him, when many people were either going away or spending the time with their families. We thought it was good he had decided to be in Toronto for the Court decision, where he did have a good press conference, instead of risking being picked up in his Montreal home without any press coverage or mobilized protest and support. The man who had performed all those abortions with the safest technique available because he thought it was his moral obligation to women in need, was now in jail. In jail for 18 months even though he had been found "not guilty" by a jury of his peers!

Q. What do you think has been the general public reaction?

A. I think there is a wide and growing sentiment of disapproval, mostly with what is seen as a "travesty of Justice". The Toronto Star and Globe and

→p.3

Mail editorials and cartoons are a reflection of this. There are some significant individual examples, like the car dealer who must have spent over a thousand dollars for an ad in the Toronto Sun to express his dismay over the Court ruling. Then the woman who wrote to the editor in yesterday's Star saying she agrees with Minister of Justice Otto Lang's opposition to abortion but feels that the jury decision should have stood. Then in today's Star we see where former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker calls on the cabinet to give Dr. Morgentaler his freedom because the Supreme Court decision was a serious retrogressive step. The federal government-appointed Advisory Council on the Status of Women, as well as the Ontario government-appointed Status of Women Council, composed of prominent and concerned men and women, have certainly given those governments advice. They have just asked the government to release Dr. Morgentaler at once. The Toronto May 10 March Committee has made the freeing Dr. Morgentaler one of its six demands.

Q. I notice, Dr. Tolentino, that you are wearing a "Why Not! Amnesty for Dr. Morgentaler" button. Is there any relationship between the government's "Why Not!" campaign and Dr. Morgentaler's conviction?

A. Yes! Dr. Morgentaler's jailing points to the hypocrisy of the federal government. Its "Why Not!" campaign, I believe, is an attempt to make us think that it cares about women's rights, when in fact it maintains an unjust and dangerous law and jails Dr. Morgentaler for challenging it, and for being such an outspoken opponent of it since it was enacted in 1969. This is the crunch point. That if Dr. Morgentaler had done the abortions quietly he would be a free and a rich man today. But instead he campaigned for abortion to be like all other medical procedures, a private matter between a patient and her medical advisor.

He first did this in 1967 when he presented a brief to the House of Commons Health Committee. In May, 1970, when the Abortion Caravan arrived in Ottawa from Vancouver, Dr. Morgentaler spoke to a rally of 500 people on Parliament Hill in support of a woman's right to chose whether she wanted an abortion, a medically competent, safe and of course a legal abortion. The following month, June, 1970 he was arrested and charge for performing an illegal abortion. I could go on giving you examples of Dr. Morgentaler's consistent support of the women's movement but the point that needs to be emphasized is that he is in jail because of his outspoken opposition to this unjust and cruel law. "Why Not! Repeal." is the other button we should all be wearing.

Q. Have you been in touch with Dr. Morgentaler? And if so how is he?

A. Yes, I have, through one phone conversation and letters. He says that the worst of all is to be closed in, in a cell with bars and the loss of freedom poor sleeping conditions, and many other things. And yet, he says, his morale and spirit are excellent. He's had a few bad days with what is called the "shock of incarceration", but he says he's over that now.

He requests that friends write to him since it is one of his few pleasures while in jail. He's in Bordeaux Jail, Gouin Blvd. W., Montreal, Quebec. Of course he has been branded with a prison number which goes after his name. It is: No. 118658. I would urge your readers to write to him about what is happening in their part of the country for his amnesty and abortion law repeal.

Q. Could you elaborate on what should be done and what is being done for his amnesty?

A. Well, firstly, we should raise the issue of his amnesty or pardon or release or freedom (we shouldn't get hung up on what we call it, I happen to prefer the term amnesty) as a single demand directed at the cabinet of the federal government. Just the issue of amnesty so that we can get the broadest response possible which is required to accomplish the one thing we want most: to get him out of jail. We need and we want people like those I told you of earlier in the interview, i.e. regardless of whether they agree with what Dr. Morgentaler has done or with the cause he defends. This demand should always be made publicly and preferably from organizations that represent large numbers of people, e.g. political parties, unions, schools, churches, civil liberties groups, professional groups, etc. Prominent individuals, persons like John Diefenbaker, should be approached for sponsorship of any committee set up to obtain amnesty. In Toronto we are meeting in a day or two to form just such a committee. This should be done right across the country, without delay. We have very little time. Dr. Morgentaler is expected to appear in court May 5 for a decision on what the court will do with his other 12 charges. His co-workers, Nurse Cornax and Doctor Macabee, still have charges outstanding against them. A powerful amnesty movement for Dr. Morgentaler could cause court officials to drop the rest of the charges against Morgentaler and stop any moves against Cornax and Macabee. I believe if we work hard we should have no trouble organizing that wide sentiment that exists for his amnesty. Let us remember one of the last statements Dr. Morgentaler made before he was jailed. He said, "I hope this (Court decision) will spur people into action, for removal of abortion from the Criminal Code. I hope enough people will feel indignant about the decision."

forward
VOICE OF WORKING PEOPLE
Toronto, 20 cents
#9
1975
June

End the vendetta now !

Morgentaler Amnesty!

By Alice Klein

"It is obvious that it is the intention of the authorities to destroy me by all possible means ... I received the heaviest sentence of any doctor in an abortion trial (even when a woman died as a result of an abortion by a doctor I know of no case where the sentence exceeded mine, whereas quacks often got light or suspended sentences; it was clear from the judgement that I had not been sentenced for this one abortion but for the challenge to this immoral law, which means in fact all the abortions which I have done...

"My only hope is that my friends outside, the public, public opinion, will help me. My morale and spirit are not broken, and they will not easily break; but I am worried and concerned about the immediate future. I know I could ease my situation and plead guilty to something which is not a crime but an attempt to act in a humane and decent way by helping women who need abortions. (This is in reference to the additional charges which are being laid against Dr. Morgentaler on May 26)...

"Thus, although reluctantly, I do ask you for a contribution to permit me to carry the fight. I also ask for any kind of support for the cause and for me personally. Do everything you possibly can to bring pressure to bear on the responsible officials, M.P.'s, ministers of justice, Federal and Provincial, the Prime Minister, advisory bodies, public opinion in general, so that the law be changed in such a way as to ensure that women have a right to safe medical abortions and real access to them without hindrance and delay; and help me personally by protesting my unjust incarceration in spite of an acquittal by a jury and the continued harassment by demanding that all other charges be dropped...

"Please help me to continue the fight for justice, humanity and sanity."

These were the words of Dr. Henry Morgentaler from Montreal's Bordeaux Jail where, in his 8 by 12 foot prison cell, with no desk, one chair, uncovered toilet and no hot water, wearing the torn, paint-splattered, unpressed prison garb, known by his new name – Prisoner #118658 and awaiting further court battles forced upon him by the relentless vendetta of the Crown Prosecution, Morgentaler was serving the second month of his 18 month sentence.

Now as a result of vigorous protest to the prison authorities about the conditions of his internment, Morgentaler has won a minor victory – a transfer to the Waterloo Rehabilitation Centre, a minimum security prison in which the conditions are less inhuman. Yet this small concession is accompanied by the new outrage perpetrated by the Justice Department – not satisfied with his 18 month sentence, they are proceeding with the remaining charges against him.

The authorities demonstrated how petty they could be in their vendetta against Dr. Morgentaler on May 26 when he was denied ten minutes, during a court appearance on the new charges, to receive the Humanist of the Year award from American Humanist Association members who had travelled to Montreal to make the presentation.

The prediction of Morgentaler's lawyer, Claude-Armand Sheppard, "Morgentaler in jail is more dangerous than Morgentaler free," may well prove true however. Only days after Lang announced that the Cabinet had no intention of reviewing Morgentaler's conviction, the Committee for Amnesty for Dr. Morgentaler was formed. Amongst its ranks are such prominent individuals as Dennis McDermott, June Callwood, Toronto Mayor Crombie, Senator David Croll, Flora MacDonald, all the NDP leadership candidates, Sam Fox, President of the Toronto Labor Council, and others. The committee has been able to include many who would take no public position on the abortion issue but who are willing, because of the Supreme Court reversal of the jury verdict, to stand behind the call for amnesty.

This committee is not the only evidence of the growing support for Morgentaler and in fact, for the whole movement for repeal. On May 10, Morgentaler and abortion rights were key issues of demonstrations across the country. On May 24, 300 marched in Ottawa to protest the imprisonment of Morgentaler and demand the repeal of the abortion laws.

The American Humanist Association has initiated an international committee for the defence of Dr. Morgentaler. Protests by AHA members overseas have been lodged with the Canadian

Continued on page 2a

adian "JUSTICE" railroads Morgentaler

forward Vol. #9 (1975) p. 2a

Outrage at Morgentaler jailing quickens movement for repeal

continued from page 1

ambassadors in the Netherlands, Great Britain and the US.

Already, the pro-choice movement has, for the first time, won some minor skirmishes with the proponents of compulsory pregnancy. At the Scarboro General Hospital in Toronto, and at the Vancouver General Hospital, pro-repeal forces rebuffed attempts by the compulsory pregnancy freaks to take over key hospital positions in order to restrict the number of abortions approved by the hospital committees.

Dr. Mackay, outgoing head of the committee at the Scarboro General explained the need for a liberal board. Before the present liberalization of the law was passed in 1969, he worked on what was called "Saturday morning clean-up." This was the job of treating all the women suffering from the botched abortions done on Friday night-payday, a jolting reminder of the effects of the policy which "pro-life" advocate.

In an election of members to the Mayor's Task Force on the Status of Women in Toronto – which recently sponsored the May 10th demonstration – three women ran on an anti-abortion platform. Though supported by Mayor Crombie, they were defeated by City Council in their bid to turn the task force into an instrument of the anti-abortion witch-hunt.

Yet in spite of the fact that public opinion is now more than ever registering in favor of Morgentaler's release and repeal of the abortion laws, those who support women's rights in this country have a long way to go, to defeat the opposition. Holding the threat of excommunication in their hands, and the enormous wealth of the church, the male hierarchy of the Catholic Church and their supporters are a force to be reckoned with. The so-called "right to life," posturing as champions of individual rights have proclaimed Morgentaler's imprisonment, "a great victory for the women and unborn children of Canada." The vanguard of the compulsory pregnancy freaks have formed a staunch back-up force to legitimize the Government's stepped up anti-abortion offensive. Curiously, while the government has refused to meet with CARAL representatives, the fetus fetishists can boast of a recent audience with Trudeau which was widely reported in the press. They are planning to present a petition with one million signatures favoring further restrictions on abortion.

The abortion issue for a long time has been one which was slow to gain support, not because the majority of Canadians didn't favor repeal but because it's an issue which most people would prefer to ignore. It touches on a painful reality, one which even those who have suffered directly under the current laws, would rather not confront directly. But with Morgentaler acquitted by a jury, sitting in jail, and facing even more charges, silence is no longer possible.

forward
Vol. 1 #9 (1975)
page 16

Where were at in IWY

After May 10 march:

by Ellie Kirzner

A woman participant in the Toronto May 10 march for women's rights received an interesting reply from the International Women's Year Secretariat when she wrote to complain about the lack of government action in the midst of all its rhetoric of concern. The office congratulated her for being part of the seven percent of Canadian women actively interested in women's rights. But, the letter went on, we are speaking to the 93 percent of women who are still not aware. Doubtless patronizing and buckpassing, the letter is also an instructive departure for an analysis of where the women's movement is at in International Women's Year.

Nourished in the general south radicalization of the mid-sixties, in the marches supporting civil rights in Selma and opposing the war in Vietnam; rocked in the cradle of the struggle against the sexism of the new left, the women's rebellion emerged as part of the Marxist movement – the first group in Toronto was known as the Women's Liberation Front.

As a new force on the Canadian political scene, it generated a host of impressive writings. Unfortunately, however it suffered many of the problems of the new left. As the new left disbanded into counter-culture, the Company of Young Canadians and the dope scene, the women's movement it spawned got caught up in cliquish and inward turning ties of sisterhood and a theoretical concoction they mistakenly believed to be Marxist which was sectarian and formal.

When the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was published in 1970, the press began to back off its earlier distortions of the women's movement as shrewish bra-burners, and began to feature the sentiments beginning to permeate the wider society. The new left women, comfortable in their cosy friendship networks, were unable to respond.

One layer moved into establishing social service agencies for women – abortion referral, health collectives, research groups – at a certain point all made easier by the appearance of OFY and LIP grants. While highly imaginative and oftentimes useful, these projects provided an easy escape from the responsibility of consolidating a political leadership for the layers of women who were just awakening.

On the other hand, many of them developed a theoretical rationale for remaining in their narrow circles – one which made it a pitiful mockery of Marxism. Proclaiming that "sisterhood is bullshit," these women raised the spectre that the movement was being invaded by "bourgeois women." To counter this spectre, which in reality showed the power of the movement to attract new supporters from broader circles, they reacted with fantasies of "serving the people" by searching for welfare women to "patronize." In this frenzied mistrust, where casual clothes were raised to a pedestal, any woman with a hair-do was suspect.

By the early 70's, this sectarian strain was reflected even in such organizations as the Waffle, where it was widely held that women were only oppressed at their

Laura Sabia

place of work and that legal rights and the abortion issue were "bourgeois" intrusions.

The Communist Party added to this economistic conception its own unique version of woman-as-nurturer. Not entirely sure that women could be trusted to build a movement rising out of their own aspirations, the CP has been ready at an instant to mesh women's liberation with anything else that comes along, even if it is directly counter to the present thrust of the women's movement.

And so while many socialist women lost themselves to the debate over whether Margaret Trudeau was more oppressed than her gardener, they missed the possibility of forging relationships with and leading movements of the wider population of women. In 1970, the dramatic abortion caravan which toured the country building support for repealing the law was the last political action of the new left women as they retreated from the tasks of mass organizing. In rejecting the abortion reform as bourgeois they in fact turned their backs on the major challenge to build a mass-based Canadian movement.

The stage was now set for the Canadian government to cunningly reach out to the budding women's rebellion. Taking advantage of the confusion in the women's movement, the Liberal government moved unhindered to crown its own women leaders. The crafty people who brought us the CYC, OFY and LIP now presented us with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Installed in May of '73, the Council was designed for reassurance, although it was forced to concede to the movement by including in its numbers Esther Greenglass, an abortion law repeal activist and Grace Hartman of CUPE.

It was a move brilliantly calculated to convey the government's "commitment" and concern about women's plight, at the same time as it was implementing only the most feeble and ineffectual of the Royal Commission's recommendations. Faced with a social rebellion charged with political meaning, the government was forced to recognize women's secondary status, which it proceeded to do by adopting the rhetoric of women's liberation argumentation and filling it with a content that was both patronizing and benign.

Just as "happiness is..." can be completed to suit the tastes of the beholder, so too "liberation" can be twisted into many political shapes. The government in its IWY propaganda has created a bizarre fantasy world where attitudes instead of social and economic structures exploit, and where any woman can willfully redefine her own status.

As the ads tell us, "WHY NOT" is "not a slogan but an attitude." "Perhaps the answer lies with us," luxuriates one, as the government in its wisdom accounts for why women are denied equal pay, access to corporate boardrooms or to the professions. Effective in farming out the chore of liberating women to corporate chiefs, parents and individual women themselves, the government has treated women's oppression like a charity extravaganza.

It hasn't been roses for the govern-

→ to 26

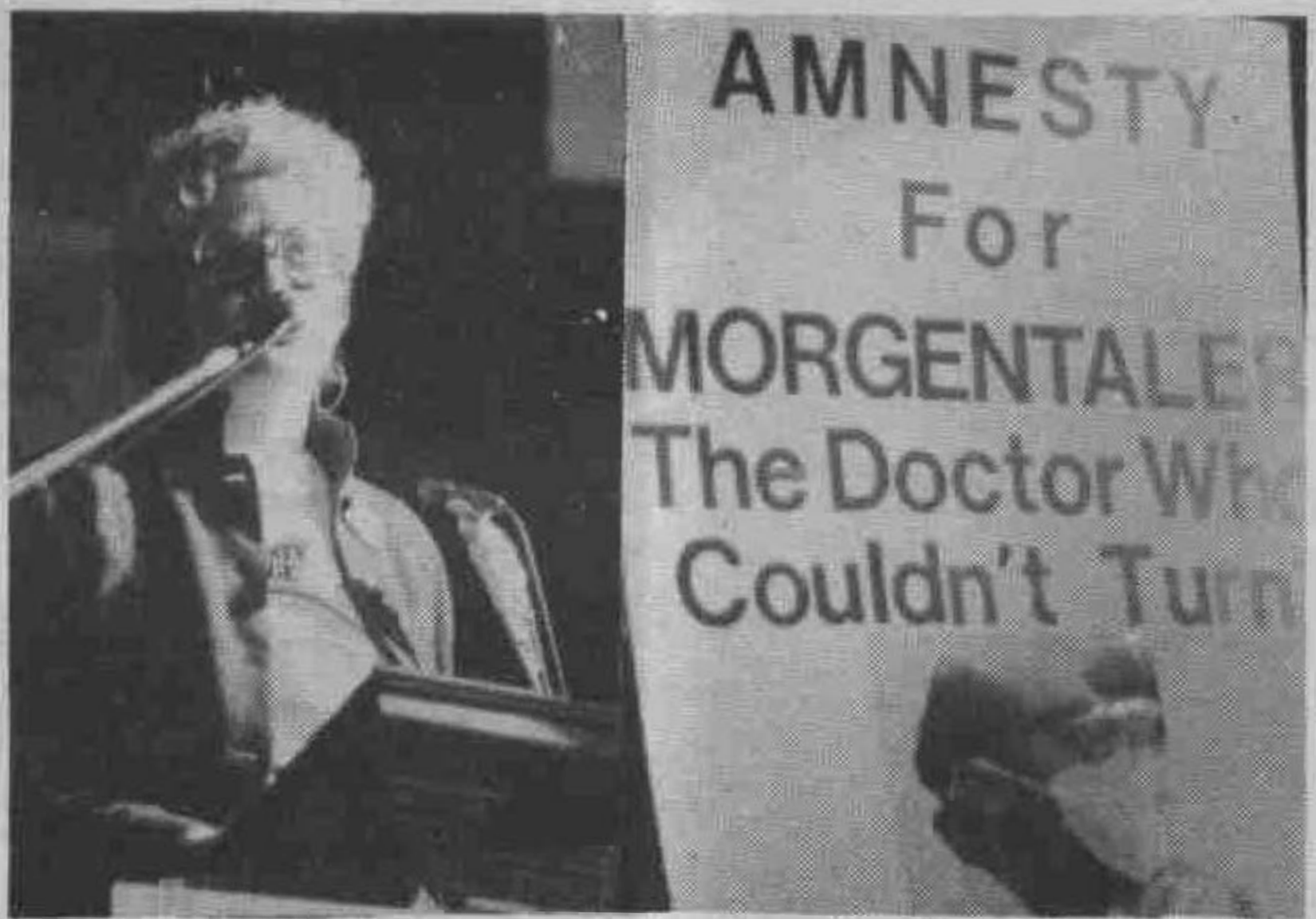
Union women meet

The May 3-4 conference of 250 union women at Humber College, Toronto is indicative of the broadening support for feminist ideas and aspirations. Sponsored by Humber College and the Toronto Labor Council, the conference attracted delegates from some 15 unions concentrated in the Toronto area.

Among other things the conference endorsed the May 10 march for women's rights and sent telegrams to the federal government demanding the release of Dr. Morgentaler.

The conference also decided to form a continuing coalition of trade union women to "coordinate women's caucuses in individual unions, to educate women to roles of leadership, and to act as a resource for women who wish to "organize." A fall conference has been called to establish the new coalition.

forward Vol.2 #1 (1975)
Editor: Wayne Roberts



800 people attended an October benefit-rally for imprisoned Dr Henry Morgentaler and raised $2000 for his support. Initiated by the Canadian Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws and widely endorsed by the civil liberties and labor communities, the rally featured Pierre Berton as MC, US feminist and radio personality Florence Kennedy and author of a new biography of Morgentaler Eleanor Pelrine.

forward Vol. 2 #4 (1976)

Morgentaler actions set stage for repeal

by Harry Paine

The fight to free Dr. Morgentaler and to win freedom of choice for women was given a new boost on February 9 and 10 at the convention, in Ottawa, of the Canadian Association for Repeal of the Abortion Laws.

One hundred and twenty-five delegates came from all parts of the country representing many new chapters and over fifty affiliated organizations. New dynamism and growth was reflected in the reports given by activists from Victoria to St. Johns.

The keynote address was given by Laura Sabia who traced the roots of the oppression of women by the state and the church throughout history. Most significant though, was her report on recent developments in Quebec. The 130,000 strong Quebec Women's Federation asked the federal government to remove abortion from the criminal code. Added to that was a poll conducted by the Centre de Recherche sur l'Opinion Publique that found 56.6% of Quebecois felt that only a woman and her doctor should decide on the abortion question.

Contrary to the image perpetrated by MPs that Quebec is a bastion of anti choice bigotry, Quebec is in the lead of a developing mass movement against restrictive abortion laws. 314 doctors signed a statement swearing they have counselled or committed illegal abortions, and 300,000 petitions for the release of Morgentaler have been signed.

Dominating the convention was the presence of Henry Morgentaler whose freedom from prison, though limited, was seen as a great victory. He was given a long standing ovation by the delegates when he declared that he was not prepared to give up the struggle, nor be intimidated in his belief that freedom of choice was the cornerstone of women's total liberation in this country.

The second day of the convention was spent lobbying various members of parliament. With the exception of the NDP members, we found very few who were in any way aware of the most basic facts on the legality and availability of abortion in Canada. It was, as they put it, very low on their priority list. The NDP caucus leaders met with the CARAL leadership and gave them much helpful advice on their campaign but they were also honest and made it clear that it was very necessary to keep up the pressure.

In general the delegates left Ottawa feeling very positive. CARAL is definitely the organization that can accomplish its goals. Now the task is to reach out to the thousands of Canadians that have not yet found the means to express their will to change a law that is inequitable and unworkable. This year is the year to do just that. This point was especially brought home by the possibility held out by Attorney-general Basford that a government committee investigating inequalities in the present abortion laws will be taken seriously. Certainly this is the time for a stepped-up campaign for action.

Already two giant strides have been taken in this direction. The usually staid and conservative Canadian Civil Liberties Association under the urging of Pierre Berton passed a motion to play a leading role in the defence of Dr. Morgentaler. This was in response to the Quebec court's imposing bail conditions on Morgentaler that stop him from speaking either publicly or privately on the issue of abortion.

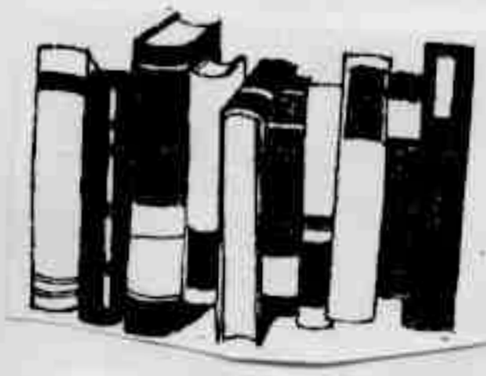
This is transparently a violation of his civil rights, as he is yet still not guilty of any charges that have been laid against him. It is obvious that the authorities consider Morgentaler the most dangerous opponent to their anti-women policies and someone who must be silenced at any cost.

While it may be possible to silence one man temporarily it is impossible to silence an idea. That was very much evidenced by the more than 400 people who paid $25 a plate to pack the Sai Woo restaurant in Toronto on February 26. They came as Charles Templeton well-known commentator and author, said, from the head table, to show their love for this man and all that he represented.

Clayton Ruby, one of the sponsors of the dinner commenting on Morgentaler's gagging by the courts assured the diners that "Morgentaler will get back his right to speak on abortion. All of us who believe in the right to choose must do so for him. I urge all of you to keep doing so."

Dr. Henry Morgentaler with supporters who greeted him with a fund raising dinner in Toronto. Later, 600 heard him speak at York University.

forward Vol. 2 #10 (1976) Page 1 of 12



Abortion a 'private decision,' doctor's new book tells women

By Alice Klein

A change has taken place in the attitude of the medical profession towards abortion, decried Dr. Harley S. Smith while addressing an Alliance for Life banquet. Ten years ago, "abortion was not only a wrong act but an inappropriate topic for conversation." Thus lament those whose concerns for the "right to life" begins at conception and ends in the delivery room.

Unfortunately, Dr. Smyth is wrong. Those days are far from over. But the veil of silence has at least partially been lifted. New voices, seeking to demystify the layers of guilt and ignorance which have shrouded the question of abortion have made an impact. None more so than that of Dr. Morgentaler, whose unprecedented persecution has, much to his opponents chagrin, given a powerful impetus to the movement for the right to choose.

And now, with the publication of Dr. Wendell Watters' **Compulsory Pregnancy, The Truth About Abortion**, the movement has gained a new weapon in the struggle for an end to Canada's restrictive abortion laws.

"The main purpose of this book is to demonstrate that such laws are now a crime against humanity." This is the task Dr. Watters, Professor of Psychiatry at McMaster University sets for himself. And in the following pages of cool, unimpassioned argument, he succeeds in providing an overview on the question which is informative and convincing.

Dr. Watters is not making the case that abortion is desirable. Rather, he dispells the myth that to be in favor of the right to choose is to be "pro-abortion" – the favorite label assigned by the mass media. "Abortion is not an acceptable means of primary birth control, nor is it individually or socially desirable. We need to reduce the need for abortion... [but as] an analogy, the surgical removal of a cancerous lung is neither individually nor socially desirable, and we should encourage more people to give up cigarette smoking and provide more funds for cancer research. But we can no more stop performing abortions while we wait for the family planning millenium than we can stop performing lung surgery in the hope that this will scare people into giving up smoking."

The analogy is instructive though imperfect. Imperfect in that it ignores the delicate problem surrounding a question so intricately interwoven with human sexuality and social outlook. These issues, however, do not escape the notice of Dr. Watters. To deal with them, the book searches far and wide, from prehistory to the present, from East to West – attempting to uncover the causes of the particular complexities which surround the abortion issue today.

Casting back to the past, Watters demonstrates the lengths to which individuals haye gone in attempting to control their fertility. For example, he says, "the methods used to interrupt unwanted pregnancies in primitive societies press the limits of human ingenuity and constitute a grim indication of the deep-seated human wish to regulate reproductivity."

The uninterrupted search to control fertility on the part of individuals from the most ancient times to the present stands in harsh contrast to the legislative measures to restrict fertility control, which by the 19th Century were pervasive.

According to Watters, "we can justifiably call restrictive abortion laws compulsory pregnancy laws, and assume that they were introduced chiefly to stimulate birth rates and population growth."

The explanation for this tension lies in the fact that governments have, since the dawn of agriculture, sought to increase their population to augment the labor force and provide fodder for war and expansionism, while individuals, for the purposes of controlling their own lives, have sought to restrict the number of children for which they are responsible.

According to Watters, "we can justifiably call restrictive abortion laws compulsory pregnancy laws, and assume that they were introduced chiefly to stimulate birth rates and population growth."

These policies have historically been implemented on a number of levels. The most blatant – those which prohibit abortion and/or birth control are only the last stand of the far more subtle pro-natalist pressures engineered through religious and social promotion of the value and importance of parenting – values which reflect negatively on childlessness and, until very recently, on having few as opposed to many children. Watters calls this phenomenon pro-natalism.

The aim of Watter's enquiry into history is to demonstrate the roots of pro-natalism as the necessary ideological component of a population policy geared to the ruling interests of society – producing more babies to serve their political interests.

This is the core of the issue for Dr. Watters because one of his central concerns is the question of overpopulation. "As we enter the last quarter of the twentieth century, our survival dictates that we all attend to the issue of population ecology." Because of the prominence of this question, in the thinking of Dr. Watters, he fails to analyze the role of pro-natalism and of restrictive abortion laws in effecting the sexual stereotyping imposed on women, so necessary to the functioning of capitalist society.

It is precisely the pro-natalism that he describes which reinforces the notion of woman as child-rearer as the fundamental definition of woman's role. Thus the book fails to note the profound relationship between pro-natalism and women's oppression.

Dr. Watters is, however, not oblivious to the impact of pro-natalism on sexuality. Rather, he explains, "while modern contraceptives have lifted the burden of

→ p. 2

forward Vol.2 #10 (1976) p.2

inevitable pregnancy from the shoulders of many sexually active couples, centuries of indoctrination have left a legacy of ignorance, fear, guilt, and inhibition that will not be dissipated overnight''.

Nor is he unaware of the special anxieties surrounding the abortion issue. ''The moral ambiguity regarding the pre-viable foetus – and people's emotional reaction to that ambiguity – have made it easy for pro-natalist establishments to lay down rules which suit social purposes.''

Dr. Watter's concern about overpopulation as a key issue of the abortion debate, does not however, make him waver from a firm commitment to the concept of freedom of choice for individuals.

He staunchly argues against the imposition of any restrictions on reproduction, whether they be in the form of compulsory pregnancy laws, as we have in Canada or in the form of restrictions on the right to reproduce. ''Advocates of repeal want abolition of all reference to abortion from the Canadian Criminal Code, not just because they reject compulsory pregnancy, but because they reject any interference by the state in this matter.''

Further, in the final chapters of the book, Dr. Watters' summary of the medical and psychological literature regarding the effects of abortion on women, provides an extremely useful and informative picture – finally dismantling the ravings of those favoring restrictive abortion laws by showing calmly and clearly the lack of evidence for their position.

Compulsory Parenthood, The Truth About Abortion, places the debate around abortion on a new and higher level. It is a testimony to the growing strength and aggressiveness of the movement for freedom of choice in this country.

– the right of both women and men to contribute to their community as best suits them,
– the right of every child and individual to fullest development from daycare to university, and
– the right of every member of the community to get around efficiently, without economic hardships and without suffering from or creating pollution.

A program addressing itself to these issues is needed. In the case of Metro and the Metroplan, for example, such a program would call on the Metropolitan Corporation to directly provide most of the 400,000 additional housing units that are estimated to be needed by the year 2001. If Metro can ''finance, construct and manage'' parks, leaving only the programming to the local municipalities, why not housing, day care, mental and physical health care?

How should such demands be raised? Obviously they are tied to those people only who have no vested interest in the status quo; these are the vast majority of the population, those who depend on working for a living, those on pensions and on welfare.

Here it needs to be repeated that a socialist city can only be won in conjunction with the struggle for a socialist Canada. Having community organizations independent and solely focused onto their neighbourhoods or cities has precisely resulted in the relatively short-lived ''reform'' experiences. A political organization, functioning also at the provincial and federal levels, is required; and of course, none meets the description, except the NDP. Now true, the NDP leadership have been fighting tooth and nail not to meet its obligations and opportunities at the municipal level. This is despite the repeated provincial convention decisions to the contrary, throughout Canada. But, winning the NDP into the municipal arena is part of the battle for socialist cities. Unfortunately there is no shortcut.

Ironically enough, when one digs deep enough into the NDP archives, one hits upon a tiny booklet from 1969 entitled: ''NDP Municipal Program – Metropolitan Toronto''. It states that the idea of party politics at the municipal level ''is one which is widely accepted in most other modern countries, but which for some strange reason never seems to have been attempted in Canada. We believe that the City would be best served by the presentation of a clear program, democratically endorsed at an open convention and supported by a group of candidates pledged to support it.''

The program itself is quite excellent. It demands a greater integration of the Metro municipalities, while establishing stronger ward councils with certain areas of responsibility at the ward level. It proposes shifting the tax load to the level where taxes are based on the ability to pay, i.e. the provincial level. All schools are to be democratically governed (high schools by a council elected by staff and students; elementary and junior high schools by a similar council with parent representation). It contains a strong commitment to extensive public housing and an endorsement of tenants' right to collective bargaining. It calls for the expansion of daycare, senior citizens' and similar services which would be available to all who need them regardless of present financial need; and it poses that public transportation costs should come out of tax revenues so that fares could eventually be eliminated. A good start towards an alternative city is therefore already here; the NDP leadership has only to be pushed into living up to the party's commitments.

The best way of exposing and opposing the Metroplan, and for that matter any plan drawn up under and within the existing capitalist system, is by not losing sight of the socialist perspective, and relentlessly and patiently building towards that goal. The few glimpses listed above should show that the efforts will be worth it, if not in our own generation then for our children.

forward Vol.2 #10 (1976)

Gov't defies juries in Morgentaler case

By Harry Paine

Three times Dr. Morgentaler has been acquitted of performing illegal abortions. Three times the right of women to freedom of choice has been upheld. Three times the people of Canada have said the law is an ass.

The Quebec Superior Court has ordered Morgentaler to appear on November 2 to face eight further charges. In total disregard for the will of the citizens of this country, the prosecution appears determined to get its pound of flesh.

Even the **Globe and Mail** in an editorial on September 20 said, a conviction on any one of these charges would only signify "that the State, through brute force, had finally forced a jury to bend to its will".

John Diefenbaker said it would be a throwback to hundreds of years ago when British kings would lock up juries "without food and heat" in order to have them render a verdict to their liking.

Federal Justice Minister Ron Basford pleads that he does not want to interfere with the administration of justice in Quebec, although the substance of criminal law in Canada is totally a federal responsibility. It is common practice for the Federal Justice Department to order the dropping of charges before provincial courts.

Dr. Morgentaler has continually emphasized that it is not just he that is being put on trial but the women of Canada as well. In a discussion with this reporter the day after the news of his acquittal, Morgentaler reiterated this point and expressed his confidence that the decision of the jury would go a long way to winning removal of the abortion law from the Criminal Code once and for all.

In Italy the government was recently brought down on this issue. Three to five thousand women die every year in that country at the hands of butcher abortionists.

Canadian women do not want to go back to that situation.

The Badgeley Commission on Abortion will be tabling its report to the justice minister shortly. Unless it totally distorts the facts it cannot say anything but that there are gross inequalities in the application and workability of the present abortion laws.

This report, together with the full acquittal of Henry Morgentaler can't help but open the door for women to put the pressure on for repeal of these laws.

A survey commissioned by the Professional Corporation of Physicians of Quebec indicated that 80% of doctors want more abortion committees in Quebec hospitals. Morgentaler provided a safe and effective means of terminating pregnancy, something that the government has refused to to guarantee. It is that government that should be standing in the dock facing charges, not Dr. Henry Morgentaler.

Dr. Henry Morgentaler

forward Vol.2 #11 (1976)

Will Que. gov't grant freedom to Morgenthaler

By Ellie Kirzner

In most ball games, it's three strikes and out.

There are different rules, however, in the continuing campaign of the justice ministry in Quebec City to make a conviction, any conviction, stick against Dr. Henry Morgentaler on charges of performing an illegal abortion.

Three times juries have thrown the government's case out of court. Yet incredibly, December 13, trial number four in the Morgentaler saga gets underway.

The latest twist in the case is Justice Minister Basford's interesting concept that justice is not within his jurisdiction. When asked whether he would intervene in the continuing persecution of Morgentaler, he cavalierly maintained that such action would be "improper".

Even the **Globe and Mail** found this hard to swallow. "Since when is the quality of justice in this country not the concern of the federal Minister of Justice?" it editorialized.

"How can he (Basford) sit back and watch these attempts to bludgeon a jury into submission? If a jury finally succumbs, what kind of vindication does he expect it to be for his Grits' abortion legislation? What kind of respect does he expect it to engender for the administration of justice? What kind of tribute to justice does he think it will be to at last send Henry Morgentaler to jail?"

The public has remained incredulous. According to Gallup, almost two-thirds of Canadians believe that abortion should be a matter decided by a woman and her doctor. No one except the fringe fanatics of the "right to life" have sunk to the defense of the Quebec government's persecution. Two hundred members of their umbrella organization, the "Coalition for Life", staged a day of lobbying on Parliament Hill November 18.

Their reactionary efforts to tighten up our already unjust laws governing abortion were countered by a demonstration by members of the Canadian Association for the Repeal of the Abortion Laws (CARAL), with placards reading: "Pro-choice is pro-child" and "Abortion: a decision for the woman and her doctor."

The new Parti-Québécois government in Quebec City, a government pledged to social reform and whose party's convention called for the end to Morgentaler's persecution, adds a new variable to the campaign. With the support of the PQ, the government gang-up on Morgentaler could be ended once and for all.

The demand for immediate amnesty must redouble in vigor at the doorstep of the new justice minister.

Demonstration before House of Commons for removal of abortion from Criminal Code

forward #24 (Jan. 1977)

Morgentaler freed Law Repeal next?

By Ellie Kirzner

Dr. Morgentaler is at last a free man! All the petty maneuvers, the insults, and the legal perversions that were the core of the former Quebec government's strategy for crushing the pro-choice movement, have been swept away in the winds of change. The scotching of a jury decision by the Quebec Court of Appeals, the overriding of three jury acquittals by the government, all the lavish efforts to silence Dr. Morgentaler, have come to naught, stilled by the actions of the Parti Quebecois Minister of Justice, Marc-Andre Bedard. Within two weeks of taking power, Bedard, honoring the decision of the PQ convention, christened the new government by dropping all further charges against the doctor, and declaring opposition to the restrictive federal abortion law.

The boldness of the PQ's move is a fine antidote to the sickly faint-heartedness of the federal Minister of Justice, Basford, who took his head out of the sand just long enough to laud the PQ's act as "fair and just".

Dr. Morgentaler's victory over legal persecution is a victory for all the women of Canada, at last presenting the possibility that childbearing will be an issue of choice rather than chance and circumstance. By demonstrating that "medical necessity" is an adequate defense for performing abortions without the encumbrance of hospital boards, the Morgentaler case has irrevocably knocked out the underpinnings of the federal abortion law. History will record the Morgentaler triumph as central to the fight to dismantle the abortion law and to the ultimate crumbling of the backwardness and superstition that surrounds childbearing in this society.

At the heart of the legal victory, three important ingredients have come together. Most central has been the incredible stamina and moral courage of Dr. Morgentaler himself. Face to face with the full force of the state apparatus in a legal war spanning an exhausting six year period, Morgentaler refused to be moved from his deeply-felt conviction that women should have the right to choose. With calm defiance, he used each new twist in the bizarre legal persecution to explain his position to the Canadian public, never yielding to the hysteria, never bending to the ever-present pressures. Even now, after all that has happened, Dr. Morgentaler has decided to re-open his Montreal abortion clinic and is asking the Quebec government for certification as a provincial institution.

The case could never have triumphed, as well, without the efforts of the large number of civil libertarians, and abortion law activists, to wage a political defense. Although it proved difficult to mount a campaign worthy of the cause, due in part to the abstention of the NDP and a certain milieu of feminists, the rallies, lobbies, meetings, petitions and advertisements attracted public attention and laid bare the hideous machinations of the Quebec legal system and its defenders in Ottawa. But one last powerful force clinched the case — the enthusiasm of the Quebec people for social change and its expression in the PQ victory.

At this juncture, the struggle to repeal the abortion law finds itself facing a whole new scenario. While the implications of the Morgentaler legal victory sink in, the Canadian public awaits the release of the federal government's committee report on the state of abortion practices in the country. Chairman Robin Badgley has already promised that the report will be a "turning point", and anti-abortionists, perhaps fearing the truth will be told, have begun to squawk about its credibility. Realizing that the fate of the abortion law hangs in mid-air, the Canadian Association for the Repeal of the Abortion Laws (CARAL) has planned a major lobby for March, in Ottawa.

The Morgentaler victory has legally torn up the abortion law by its very roots. If ever there has been a moment to seize the initiative, it is now.

forward #26 (1977)

Freedom of choice forces to take more militant stance

By Harry Paine

Delegates to the annual conference and lobby of the Canadian Association for Repeal of the Abortion Laws met in an angry mood in Ottawa on March 1st. A large number of the delegates were doctors, staff people from women's centres, referral services and family planning units. On the "front line" of the struggle for freedom of choice, confronted every day with the plight of women with unwanted pregnancies, these people were a significant factor in the mood of the conference.

The Badgley Report on the operation of the abortion laws only served to rub salt on wounds when it was released a few weeks previous.

Every bit of statistical evidence contained in the report backed up CARAL's purpose—to remove the abortion law from the criminal code—while the conclusion of the report was that the law should be applied more equitably.

Reports from the delegates across the country were filled with chilling stories on the treatment that women were receiving as a result of the law and its ambiguity.

The abortion situation appears to be getting worse rather than more liberalised, as the government would have us believe. Cutbacks in social service funding have been hitting this area hard. Abortion procedures in hospitals and family planning services are often considered the most expendable. Almost 10,000 women were forced to seek abortions in the United States in 1975 and there is no doubt that there has been a dramatic increase in that number since then.

" In terms of all civilian hospitals (1348) in Canada in 1976, 20.1% had established a therapeutic abortion committee", Badgley's report revealed. Even these figures do not tell the real story, for the majority of those hospitals are concentrated in only four provinces, B.C., Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. Even worse is the fact that many of these publicly funded institutions will not do abortions under any circumstances.

At the Conference strategy workshops there were a number of proposals to escalate the fight for repeal of the law, for a wider public information program, hiring of organizers to build the memberships of CARAL and focussing on local and provincial problems.

A more militant future face for CARAL was evidenced by side-discussions suggesting sit-ins at hospitals to break the quota systems on abortions and encouragement of doctors to defy the law.

Dr. Henry Morgentaler and the delegates from Quebec reported that the Morgentaler clinic had reopened with the assurance from the PQ Government that there would be no more prosecutions. Morgentaler is now billing Quebec Medicare for the expenses of his patients. He also intends to train doctors in his clinic and has offered his location as a training facility to the Minister for Social Services.

A number of delegates were also active members of the NDP, which is the only party committed to the repeal of section 251 of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion, There was some informal discussions on preparation for the NDP National Convention in Winnipeg this June. Pressure must be put on Saskatchewan and Manitoba to lead the way in setting up free-standing clinics.

forward #8 July 1979

Union women plan activities

by Eleanor Jewitt

The Organized Working Women (OWW) held a small but enthusiastic annual conference in Toronto on May 13 and 14. Those present renewed their pledge to be a powerful voice for working women through their own union membership. They pointed out that they are recognized as a legitimate vehicle for action and they intend to mobilize men and women members of the trade union movement around "women's issues." They will use the $19,000 budget they negotiated with the Secretary of State to carry out their mandate.

In their statement entitled "The Unemployment Crisis and the Ontario Election" they exposed the Conservatives' callous and sexist definition of full employment around categories of "prime age males", "women over 25" and "youth" each having a different "acceptable" rate of unemployment.

One group interested in checking whether OWW can institutionalize change for women in the trade union movement is the office of the Secretary of State. The OWW negotiated a contract with the Secretary of State that has a budget of $19,000. OWW will use this money to hire a full-time woman to carry out its mandate.

A statement of intent on the expansion of OWW was passed indicating that OWW is interested in forming chapters of OWW throughout the province. Three visiting delegates from the March 17th Working Women's Conference in Thunder Bay were in attendance at the OWW (Toronto Area Conference) in preparation for the upcoming founding convention of OWW (Thunder Bay).

The OWW Newsletter will be out for the OFL Sept. 16, 17, & 18th conference on problems of women workers and for the CLC Second Women's conference called for Jan. 12, 13 & 14th , 1978 in Ottawa.

In the fall active committees will be meeting on Employee Benefits, Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value and the Newsletter while the OWW reaches out to workers in the shops and offices.

forward #31 Feb. 1978

Discrimination hits women workers

By Adrian Firan

The discrimination that women face in Canada is worse now than it was ten years ago.

Working women are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as males.

Two month strike of BC Tel workers has sparked massive union solidarity

For those who are lucky enough to have a job, the differential between men's and women's wages is on the increase. Today, women clerical workers make only 64% of comparable male salaries, and sales personnel 40%. Contrary to the myth of women's increased accessibility to traditionally male and thus higher paid areas of work, womenmanagers receive only 57% of the salary of their male counterparts.

The AIB has struck a further blow to the struggle for equal pay for work of equal value with its consistent rulings turning back catch-up increases for women workers. Even the director of the women's bureau of the Ontario labor ministry has conceded that Canada's 3.8 million working women have seen the gap between their own and men's wages for performing the same jobs grow over the last five years.

While the trade union movement has shown increased signs of interest in the equal pay issue, the recent CLC education conference on equality of opportunity and treatment of women workers showed that there is still a long way to go. A typical example of women's underrepresentation in the leadership of the union movement is the Canadian Union of Postal Workers which has no women on its national executive, even though 60% of its union members are female. When some of the 400 delegates at the conference contested the "educational" character of the gathering and pushed to allow the passing of resolutions, the move was vetoed by CLC vice-president Shirley Carr.

The trade union leadership aren't the only ones that can be faulted for more talk than action. Far more insidious was the recent equal pay—equal opportunity conference organized by the Ontario Ministry of Labor. Activists, both within and outside of the trade union movement, found fault with the conference, which cost over $20,000. The Minister of Labor was absent from the meeting and no representative of the federal government was invited. Nor was a representative from CUPE invited to elaborate on their equal pay for work of equal value provision. Rather, conference participants were treated to the conventional vagaries on the difficulties of implementing equal pay in an era of government restraint, and overstudied laments about the increasing low paying ghettoization of women workers. But nonetheless, the conference brought together some angry women not prepared to accept evasion. The ball is clearly in their court.

forward #36 May 1979

NDP rounds out its platform on women

by Alice Klein

In the film **Norma Rae**, Hollywood has presented a new sort of heroine. She's a worker and she's a fighter. She decides to fight for the union. Her growth mirrors the real-life struggles of women workers, which are happening on a scale we've never seen before.

Last year, the women at Fleck made headlines when they stuck to the union in spite of intimidation from the crash helmeted, billy club wielding O.P.P. Recently, a 12 week strike against closed circuit TVs in washrooms at Toronto's Puretex Knitting Company resulted in victories for the mainly Italian immigrant women workers there. Right now, in the small sleepy town of Acton, Ontario, the workers at Superior Glove Works—mostly women—are engaged in a bitter unionizing drive. And the list goes on.

Young and old, immigrant and native-born, big city and small town —women workers are becoming a force to be reckoned with. So much so, that for the first time, the NDP has made job equality for women a major election issue.

The NDP platform denounces the cutbacks on programs geared to improve job opportunities for women. It calls for a strict affirmative action program in the federal civil service. It plans to make government contracts with the private sector conditional on implementation of affirmative action. It pledges to support provinces with dollar for dollar payments for daycare centers and to set aside $15 million to help rape crisis centers, emergency hostels and other women's service agencies.

Regrettably, Broadbent has failed to raise the need for women to have control over their reproductive lives through the option of safe, legal abortion. Organizations like Planned Parenthood, the YWCA, the Canadian Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women are trying to inject this issue into the election, pointing out that the great majority of Canadians favor leaving the decision to a women and her doctor.

The NDP's decision to interject the issue of working women into the election only highlights the resounding failure of the Liberal government's record.

A decade after the Liberals appointed a Royal Commission on the Status of Women, a score of key recommendations remain ignored or implemented only in a partial manner. The government's wage controls not only kept women's wages down; they widened the gap between male and female wages by tying all increases to a percentage of previous wages. The average woman still makes barely half the income of the average man.

The federal civil service has been a pacesetter in keeping women in their place, jobwise. Three-quarters of male civil servants make more than $13 thousand, while less than one third of women do so. The number of women ghettoized in "support staff" positions has increased from 68 to 80% since 1972. As a result of government economic policies, the rate of female unemployment has swollen from 3.7 to over 9.5% since 1967, and that doesn't count the hidden unemployed and those recently disqualified for UIC by the government.

The federal government has called for "further studies" into these and similar problems, a delaying tactic which the NDP has ridiculed. The NDP has called for action, not further studies.

forward
#42 - July 1980

A new force in the labor movement

Problem of unionizing women

by Wayne Roberts

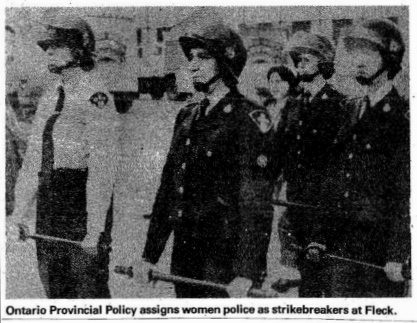
If the trends of the last ten years continue, women will be playing an increasingly important role in Canadian unions, according to a recently released government publication.

Julie White's *Women and Unions*, prepared for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, recognizes that women are presently under-represented in unions. Despite the fact that they make up 38% of the workforce, only 27% of working women are organized. Moreover, women are not well represented in leadership bodies of unions. Only 16.7% of executive office holders are women, and in international unions the figure is even worse — 4.5%.

Nevertheless, White argues, this poor showing represents the dead weight of the past, not the uplifting trends of the future.

White discounts the two major reasons that are commonly given to explain women's lack of prominence in unions — the supposed passivity and disinterest of women workers, and the alleged discrimination by trade unions. Both of these faulty explanations place the blame on people's attitudes, and not on the real problems which people face, White maintains.

When you look at the statistics, White claims, it becomes clear that attitudes have little to do with women's membership in unions. How can attitudes, which have to be common to many people in order to be effective, explain the tremendous variations in union membership? For instance, only two percent of women bank workers are unionized. Yet women performing white collar work in the public sector are 65.7% organized. Only 47.9% of women in manufacturing are organized, yet 68.5% of women in construction carry a union card. Clearly, White concludes, the type of industry and employer and the general level of unionization have more to do with women's membership in unions than any attitude which women are said to share.



Ontario Provincial Policy assigns women police as strikebreakers at Fleck.

How, then, does White explain the low rate of unionization among women? She gives three sets of reasons.

First, unions are strongest and most established in traditional occupations like construction, transportation and mining. Women, however, are mostly concentrated in the new growth industries of the last few decades, especially service and white collar work. Moreover, most of these women are first generation permanent workers — until 1950, it was rare for a married woman with children to work.

Second, White believes that private employers in the white collar and service field are fiercely opposed to unionism. This accounts for the contrast between women in the private sector, the vast majority of whom are unorganized, and the women in the public sector, the majority of whom are organized.

Third, White believes that the type of jobs which most women have makes it very difficult to establish unions. In manufacturing, a higher proportion of men (34.4% of men compared to 19.9% of women) work in large impersonal companies with over 500 employees. A higher proportion of women (56% of women compared to 44.6% of men) work in small, highly competitive shops employing less than 200 people. In other areas of the economy such as banks and restaurants, women are even more isolated, often working with fewer than ten people. Unions in these settings are difficult to organize and expensive to service.

Despite all these disadvantages, women have been joining the union movement in unprecedented numbers. They account for almost half a million new union members of the last decade or so. Having joined unions, many women are forming caucuses such as Organized Working Women in Ontario, which presses for the inclusion of feminist issues in all union activities.

These women are changing the face of the labor movement, White believes. Since many of them are members of nationally-based public sector unions, they have joined the list in challenging the dominance of U.S.-based international unions. Since many women unionists now see themselves as permanent members of the workforce, they are insisting on new types of contract demands, such as paid maternity leave. Since many women workers are self-supporting — indeed many are sole-support mothers — they are increasingly insistent about equal pay for equal work.

As a result of this pressure, union women now earn 8.6% less than men doing similar work. By contrast, non-unionized women in the occupations White studied earned 16.8% less than men doing similar work. Unions, White concludes, have been much more successful than government legislation in winning equal pay for equal work.

"Only with struggle will women obtain an equal role in the union movement," White concludes. As recent battles at Fleck and Radio Shack show, hell hath no fury like a union maid scorned. Although governments spent much more money policing pickets at these struck plants than has ever been spent policing equal pay laws, these women stuck to their union and won.

White believes that this is the trend of the future.

forward #49 (1983)

Freestanding clinic open

Ontario's first free standing abortion clinic opened this month in Toronto. "This whole thing wasn't Dr. Morgentaler's idea at all," according to Judy Rebick, a leading spokesperson for pro-clinic forces. About a year ago, as it became apparent that access to abortion was becoming increasingly difficult a small group set up the Committee for the Establishment of Abortion Clinics, and with the help of Dr. Morgentaler selected a staff. In the meantime The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics was organized with the aim of rallying support around the clinic once it opened. A major breakthrough was the Ontario Federation of Labour's support.

At the June 11 meeting of the Toronto area conference of the Ontario Left Caucus of the New Democratic Party the following resolutions were passed: 1) In keeping with the long-standing policy of the ONDP for the right of women to chose a medically safe abortion we call on the parliamentary caucus to vigorously defend in public the right of women to have dignified access to the free standing clinics established by Dr. Henry Morgentaler in Toronto and in Winnipeg, and further 2) we urge that the caucus publicly campaign for the obligation of the appropriate minister of health to accredit the aforementioned free standing clinics under the hospital acts of their respective provinces.

forward #51 p.7 (1984)

ONDP supports Morgentaler

by Gord Doctorow

Unemployment, women's rights, Nicaragua and extension of public financing to Catholic schools were the issues that dominated the debates of the 1984 biennial Ontario New Democratic Party convention.

Just more than 700 voting delegates registered at the Hamilton Convention Centre for the three-day meeting at the end of June. The unusually low attendance reflected the general deterioration and demoralization of the riding associations that both the Ontario and federal branches of the NDP had been experiencing in recent years. The parliamentary caucus's narrow role helped create this atmosphere.

With the prospect of an imminent federal election and an Ontario election expected not long after, the party's core needed to be rallied as a united force.

MPP Richard Johnston's hard-hitting report on the shameful and widespread poverty in Ontario and party leader Bob Rae's populist speech on the current situation created the image of a fighting party. On the other hand, the leadership maneuvered to absorb and constrict dissidence. For example, the debating time, already tightly constrained, was chopped down to make time for a series of petit bourgeois, faddish, futurology talks.

Anticipating a rancorous division over the parliamentary caucus's support for extending state funding of Catholic separate schools to the end of grade 13, the leadership shelved the expected report of the task force on education. Then the NDP Provincial Executive presented the convention with an emergency resolution which tried to encompass dissidents by calling for job security for education workers and funding guarantees for the public school system.

On the unemployment issue: The convention was presented with a large task force report in which the question of the shorter work week was reduced to a proposal for a legislated 40-hour work week (presently 48 hours) and a phased reduction to 32 hours by 1990 with no loss in take-home pay.

This report sidestepped involving the party in the current trade union struggle for the shorter work week to counter massive unemployment. At the same time, with the target date of 1990, it freed the party from any commitment in the coming provincial election campaign to a major reduction of the legal work week in its first term of office.

The Left Caucus responded with a referral from Ottawa delegate Marv Gandall who proposed that the immediate goal conform to the 35 hours with no loss in pay advocated by the Canadian Labour Congress. In addition, Gandall's referral opposed work sharing schemes and supported projected union struggles for the CLC's demand. The party brass killed the referral by enlisting the support of OFL Secretary-Treasurer Terry Meagher who spoke against it and mobilized their considerable block vote of unionists against their own unions' official position. The chairman, Jeff Rose, president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, allowed debate to be cut off after hearing only two speakers.

A symbolic concession: The convention adopted telegrams of solidarity with the British coal miners and with the German metalworkers' struggle for a 35-hour work week — both resolutions moved by Left Caucus supporters. Praise for the German struggle was echoed in federal party leader, Ed Broadbent's, speech.

The party and trade union leadership actually weakened the task force report through an amendment eliminating the 1990 target date. With the adjournment of the convention the amendment died, but will come before the next provincial council meeting.

The biggest challenge before the convention was for the party to move beyond its passive pro-abortion-choice position and to explicitly support the campaign to establish legal abortion clinics and to defend Dr. Morgentaler's court struggle to establish this legality. To maintain activist support, the top circles of the party leadership and trade union brass supported a resolution moved by leading pro-choice campaigner Judy Rebick that contained these ideas. After an extended debate in which MPPs divided on both sides of the issue, the convention majority adopted the resolution. Although a major victory for the women's movement it was won only after a lot of hard fighting including defeating the Provincial Executive's conciliationist opportunism in recommending that Right to Life be permitted to set up a table at the convention.

The last major debate was on the resolution proposed by MP Dan Heap, which called for establishing an NDP representative in Nicaragua to monitor the situation as an aid to the revolutionary government against U.S. military intervention. Despite the fact that this proposal had the support of 29 ridings, the highly manipulated Resolutions Committee and the chair prevented this resolution from obtaining priority for floor discussion. Eventually, it was debated and defeated.

forward #51 (1984)

Morgentaler case

by Angie Codina

"...a victory for the women of Canada," Dr. Henry Morgentaler was overheard to say in the excitement and crush of the crowd as he was acquitted of conspiring to commit illegal abortions. A jury of six women and six men found him not guilty on charges that could have resulted in a penalty of life imprisonment.

Morgentaler openly admitted breaking the law—a law that violates women's rights. It became very clear through the widely reported evidence presented at the trial that the present laws discriminate not only against women but in particular against working class women. Dr. Watters of McMaster University gave convincing evidence showing how the law oppresses women. Various medical and other witnesses further pointed out the increase in the danger to women's health as abortions are delayed through the therapeutic committee process. Many women were attracted to Morgentaler's free-standing abortion Toronto clinic for this reason.

The present criminal legislation with respect to abortion has created and perpetuates a situation in which women have inevitably been forced to go to other provinces or outside of the country in order to obtain an abortion.

The Morgentaler decision reflects growing disillusionment with Canada's present abortion laws. A significant majority of Canadians presently believe that the abortion decision should be left to the woman and her doctor. The Canadian Medical Association has decided that the decision as to whether a woman should have an abortion should be made solely by herself and her doctor. Recently the Canadian Psychiatric Association echoed this position.

It is clear that the public feels that the government should not be concerned with legislating personal moral beliefs. The acquittal reflects the desire of the public to protect a democratic right that women should have, notwithstanding the concentrated opposition of the judicial system and the legislators to deny women such a right.

Morgentaler carried out an exemplary and principled legal defence openly and publicly, defying a viciously reactionary law. The women's movement must mobilize the broadest defence in order to support Morgentaler's plans to reopen his clinic and block further persecution. In particular, the Manitoba NDP government should withdraw its charges against him as Mary Rowles, president of the Ontario NDP women's committee urges, and permit the establishment of free-standing clinics in order to reflect its commitment to women's rights.

Subscribe and be sure to get

forward

10 ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION
$5.00

Box 778, Adelaide St. P.O.
Toronto, Ont. M5C 2K1

Name _____

Address _____